

Union Calendar No. 472

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 2914

[Report No. 116-574]

To make available necessary disaster assistance for families affected by major disasters, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 22, 2019

Mr. ESPAILLAT (for himself and Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

NOVEMBER 16, 2020

Additional sponsors: Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. CARBAJAL, Ms. NORTON, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, and Mr. MCNERNEY

NOVEMBER 16, 2020

Reported with an amendment; committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on March 22, 2019]

A BILL

To make available necessary disaster assistance for families
affected by major disasters, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 *This Act may be cited as the “Housing Survivors of*
5 *Major Disasters Act of 2020”.*

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 *In this Act:*

8 (1) *FEMA.*—The term “FEMA” means the Fed-
9 eral Emergency Management Agency.

10 (2) *ADMINISTRATOR.*—The term “Adminis-
11 trator” means the Administrator of FEMA.

12 **SEC. 3. ELIGIBILITY FOR AND USE OF DISASTER ASSIST-**
13 **ANCE.**

14 (a) *FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.*—Notwithstanding any
15 other provision of law, individuals and households described
16 in subsection (c) may be eligible for assistance made avail-
17 able under section 408 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster
18 Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174) in
19 connection with a major disaster declared by the President
20 under section 401 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5170), including
21 Hurricane Maria of 2017.

22 (b) *USE OF FUNDS.*—Any assistance provided pursu-
23 ant to subsection (a) may include costs relating to obtaining
24 title for a property described in subsection (c)(1), including

1 *the cost of land surveys and any other taxes or fees associ-*
2 *ated with obtaining the title for such property.*

3 (c) *ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS OR HOUSEHOLDS.*—With
4 *respect to a major disaster declared by the President under*
5 *section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and*
6 *Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170), an individual*
7 *or household described in this subsection is an individual*
8 *or household who—*

9 (1) *is residing on a property located in the area*
10 *for which the major disaster was declared but does not*
11 *have documented ownership rights to such property*
12 *and is not renting such property; or*

13 (2) *is or was residing in an area for which a*
14 *major disaster has been declared by the President*
15 *under section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster*
16 *Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C.*
17 *5170), during the designated incident period, includ-*
18 *ing residing in any housing accommodation or prop-*
19 *erty upon which a housing accommodation is located,*
20 *including any living quarters, boardinghouse, bunk-*
21 *house, manufactured home, mobile home, or travel*
22 *trailer.*

23 (d) *EVIDENCE.*—

24 (1) *CONSIDERATION.*—*In making a determina-*
25 *tion to provide assistance pursuant to this Act, the*

1 Administrator shall consider a wide range of evi-
2 dence.

3 (2) ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF EVIDENCE.—In de-
4 termining if an individual or household is eligible for
5 assistance pursuant to this Act, the Administrator
6 shall accept either a declarative statement or the pres-
7 entation of at least one item of alternative evidence,
8 including the following:

9 (A) A utility (including gas, electric, sewer,
10 or water) bill with the name and address of the
11 individual.

12 (B) A merchant's statement (including a
13 credit card, delivery notice, or first class mail)
14 with the name and address of the individual.

15 (C) A pay stub from an employer with the
16 name and address of the individual.

17 (D) A current driver's license or State-
18 issued identification card of the individual.

19 (E) The deed or title for the applicable
20 property.

21 (F) A mortgage payment booklet or another
22 mortgage document.

23 (G) Property title of mobile home certificate
24 of title.

25 (H) A real estate property tax receipt.

1 (I) A school registration containing the ad-
2 dress of self, child, or children.

3 (J) A will and testament with the name
4 and address of the individual.

5 (K) In a State that does not require a will
6 and testament for the transfer of immovable
7 property, a death certificate and birth certificate
8 that establishes an automatic transfer of legal
9 ownership.

10 (L) Medical records that list the name and
11 address of the individual.

12 (M) A charitable donation receipt that list
13 the name and address of the individual.

14 (N) Any other documentation, certification,
15 identification, or proof of occupancy or owner-
16 ship not included on this list that can reasonably
17 link the individual requesting assistance to the
18 applicable property.

19 **SEC. 4. DECLARATIVE STATEMENT.**

20 (a) **DEVELOPMENT OF DECLARATIVE STATEMENT.—**

21 (1) **IN GENERAL.—**Not later than 30 days after
22 the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator
23 shall create, in coordination with the appropriate au-
24 thorities of the applicable jurisdiction, and distribute,
25 where necessary, a declarative statement form that an

1 applicant for assistance provided pursuant to section
2 3 may use to self-certify such applicant's eligibility
3 for assistance pursuant to this Act.

4 (2) *PROHIBITION OF NOTARIZATION.*—The Ad-
5 ministrator may not require the declarative statement
6 form created under paragraph (1) to require notariza-
7 tion by the applicant.

8 (b) *EXEMPTIONS.*—A declarative statement form cre-
9 ated under subsection (a)(1) is exempt from publication no-
10 tice, public comment periods, and agency information col-
11 lection review and approval by the Office of Management
12 and Budget required by the Paperwork Reduction Act (44
13 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.).

14 (c) *GUIDANCE.*—Not later than 30 days after the date
15 of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall provide
16 written notification and guidance to employees of FEMA
17 regarding the requirements of this Act.

18 (d) *PUBLICATION.*—Not later than 30 days after the
19 date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall—

20 (1) make the declarative statement form created
21 under subsection (a)(1) available in Spanish and
22 English at all active Disaster Recovery Centers; and
23 (2) publish in English, Spanish, and any other
24 locally predominant languages on the website of
25 FEMA and on social media the declarative statement

1 form and instructions on how applicants can reopen
2 or seek further appeal of relevant determinations.

3 (e) *PAST DISASTERS.*—For applicants of assistance
4 provided pursuant to section 3 since January 1, 2017, the
5 Administrator shall provide an applicant not fewer than
6 180 days to submit the declarative statement form to reopen
7 or appeal a case after such applicant has received notice
8 of the right to do so.

9 **SEC. 5. REPAIR AND REBUILDING.**

10 Section 408(c) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief
11 and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174) is amend-
12 ed—

13 (1) in paragraph (2)(A)(i) by striking “to a safe
14 and sanitary living or functioning condition” and in-
15 serting “to ensure that such residences are habitable
16 during longer term recovery (including through co-
17 ordination with other sources for repair and rebuild-
18 ing of such residences); and

19 (2) in paragraph (4) by striking “in cases in
20 which” and all that follows through the end and in-
21 serting “if the President determines such assistance is
22 a cost effective alternative to other housing solutions,
23 including the costs associated with temporary housing
24 provided under this section.”.

1 **SEC. 6. POST-DISASTER HOUSING ASSISTANCE ANALYSIS**

2 **AND REPORT.**

3 (a) *ANALYSIS.—The Administrator, in coordination*
4 *with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development,*
5 *shall conduct an analysis comparing the costs, benefits, and*
6 *effectiveness of assistance provided under the Disaster Hous-*
7 *ing Assistance Program, including any case management*
8 *services provided, with other temporary housing options*
9 *provided by the Administrator under the Robert T. Stafford*
10 *Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C.*
11 *5121 et seq.).*

12 (b) *PROVISION OF DATA.—The Secretary shall ensure*
13 *that public housing authorities engaged in carrying out the*
14 *Disaster Housing Assistance Program relay data con-*
15 *cerning the extent and effectiveness of case management*
16 *services in transitioning individuals and households toward*
17 *self-sufficiency under the Program compared to other alter-*
18 *native disaster assistance programs available under the*
19 *Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assist-*
20 *ance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.).*

21 (c) *REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date*
22 *of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit*
23 *to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of*
24 *the House of Representatives and the Committee on Home-*
25 *land Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a*
26 *report that contains the analysis required under subsection*

1 (a) and an analysis of the oversight mechanisms, program
2 integrity checks, and financial management measures uti-
3 lized in carrying out the Program compared to alternative
4 disaster housing assistance programs under the Robert T.
5 Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42
6 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.).

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